

Saga™

BRIAN K. VAUGHAN FIONA STAPLES

CHAPTER
FIVE



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CHAPTER
FIVE

Saga

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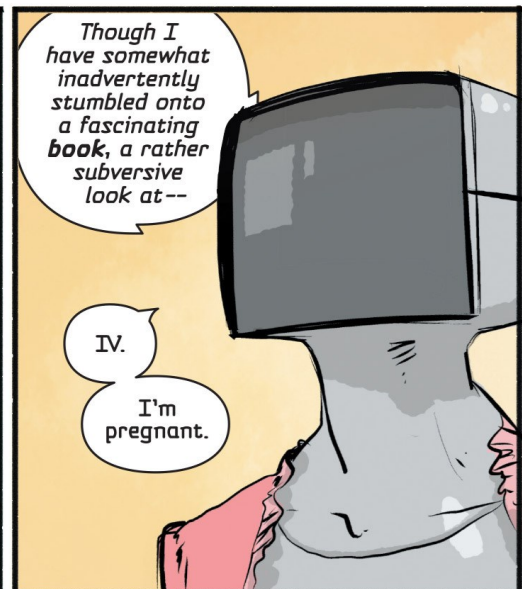
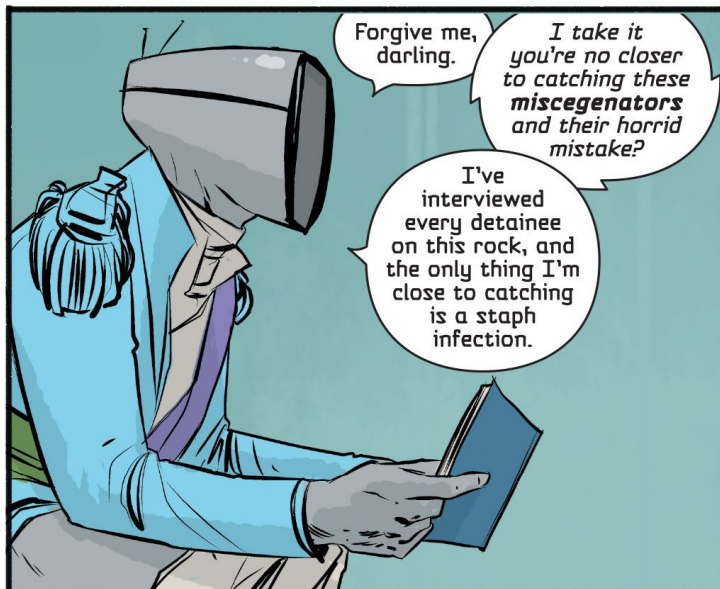
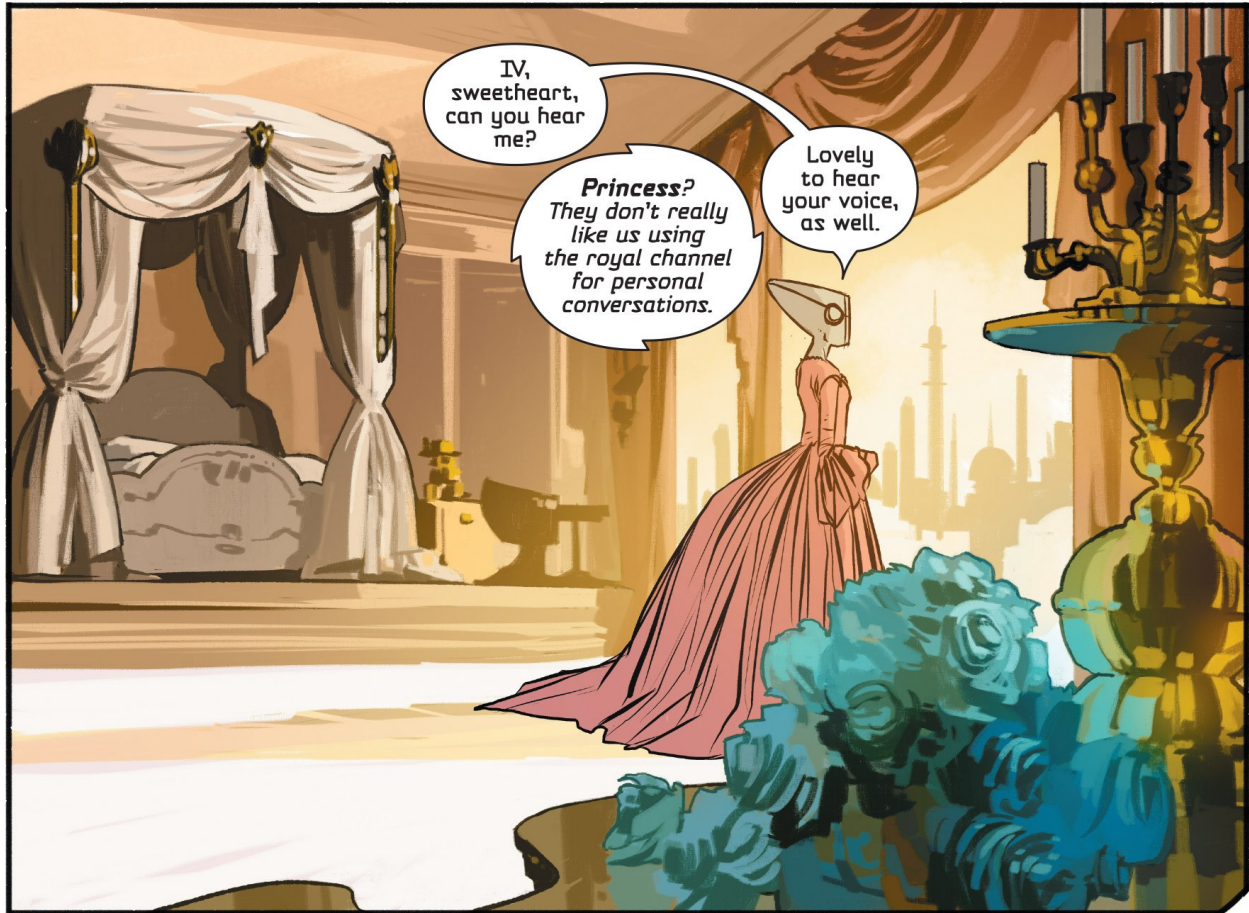
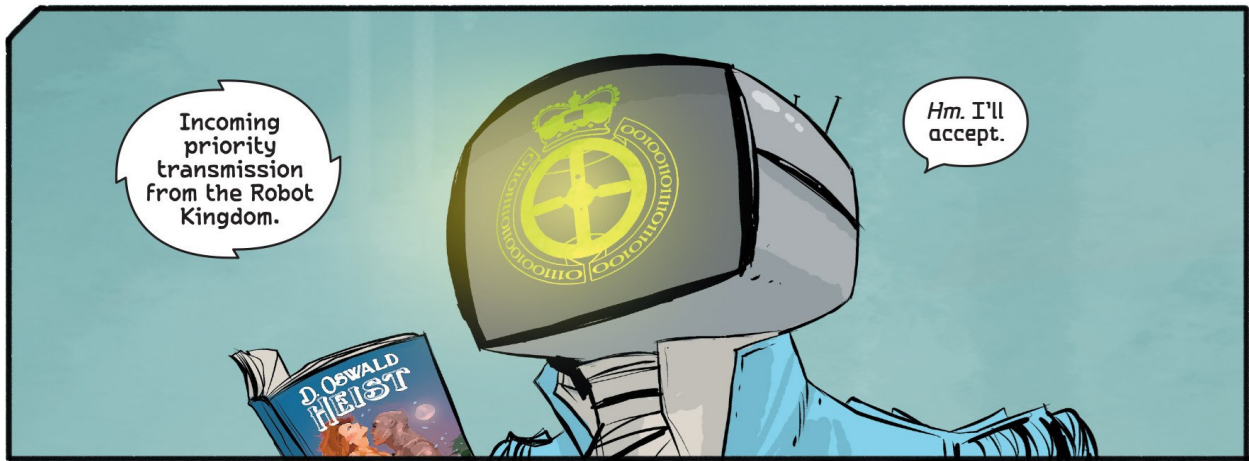
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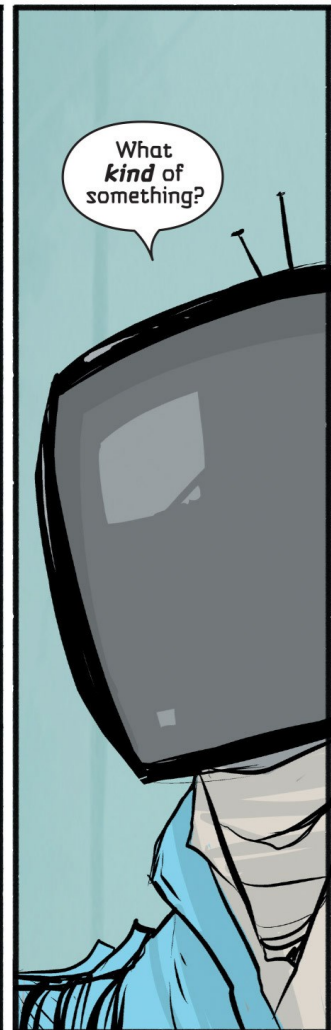
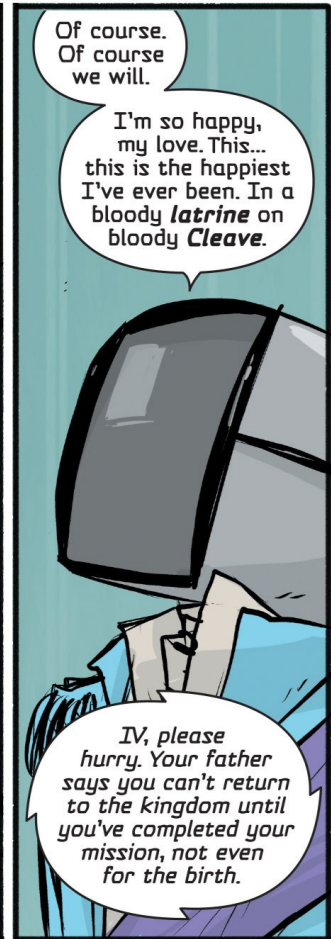
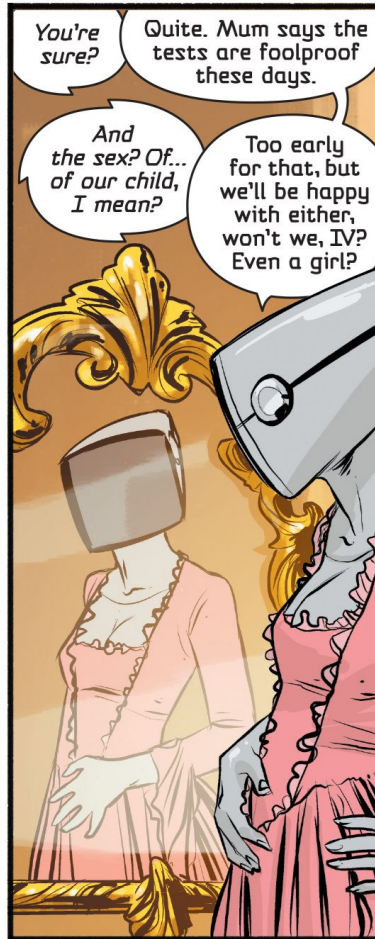
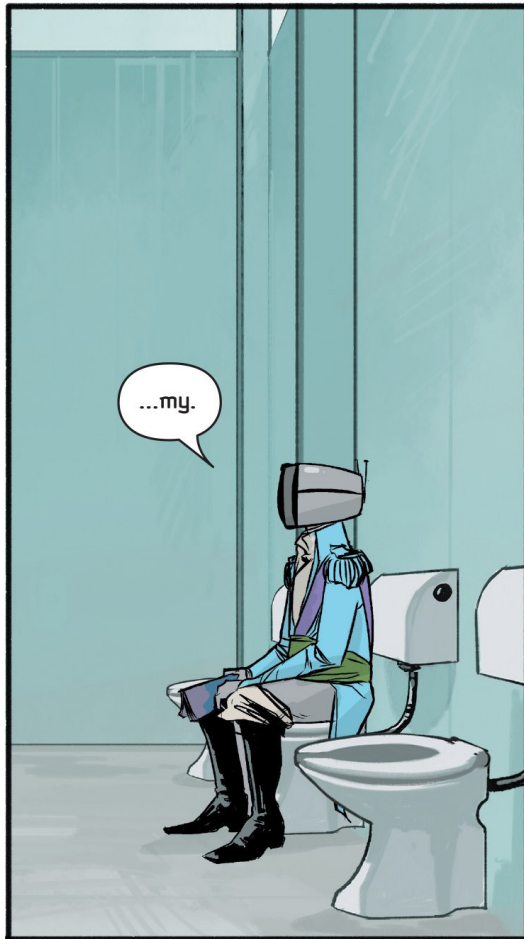
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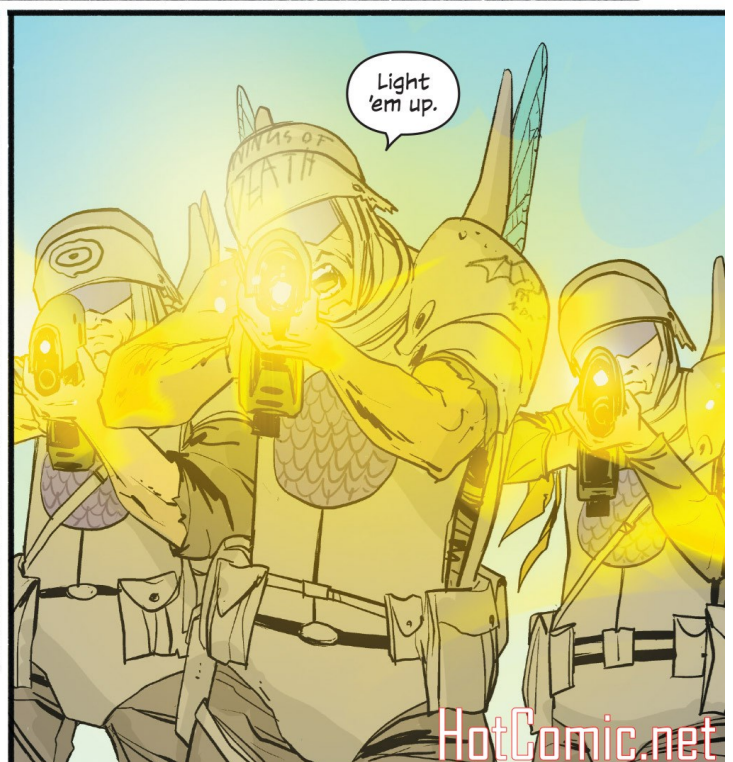
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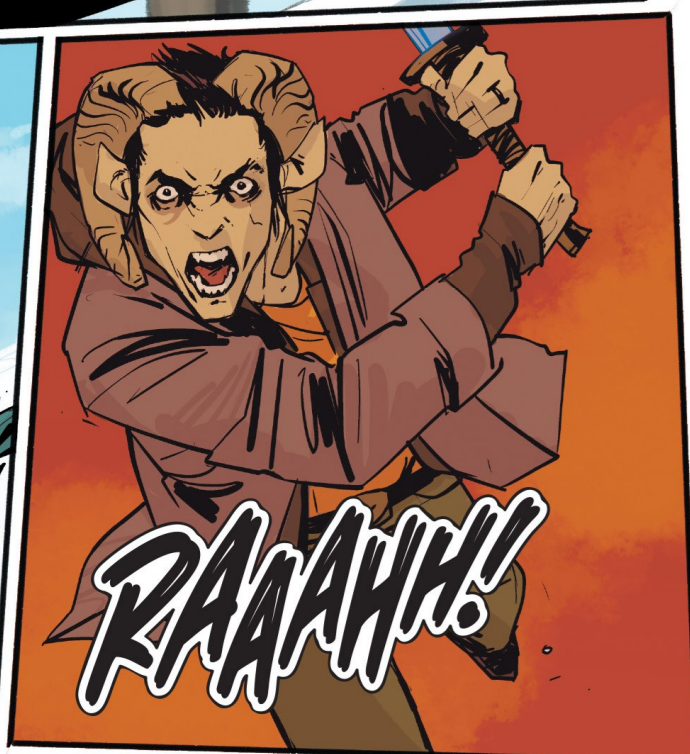
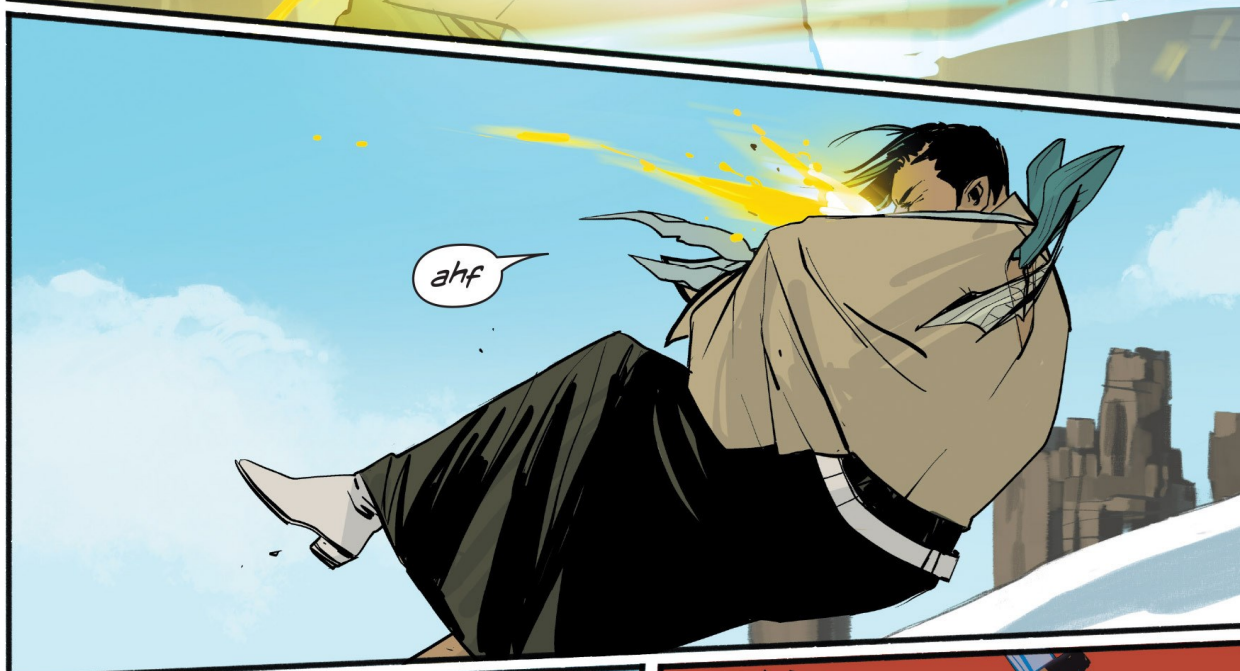


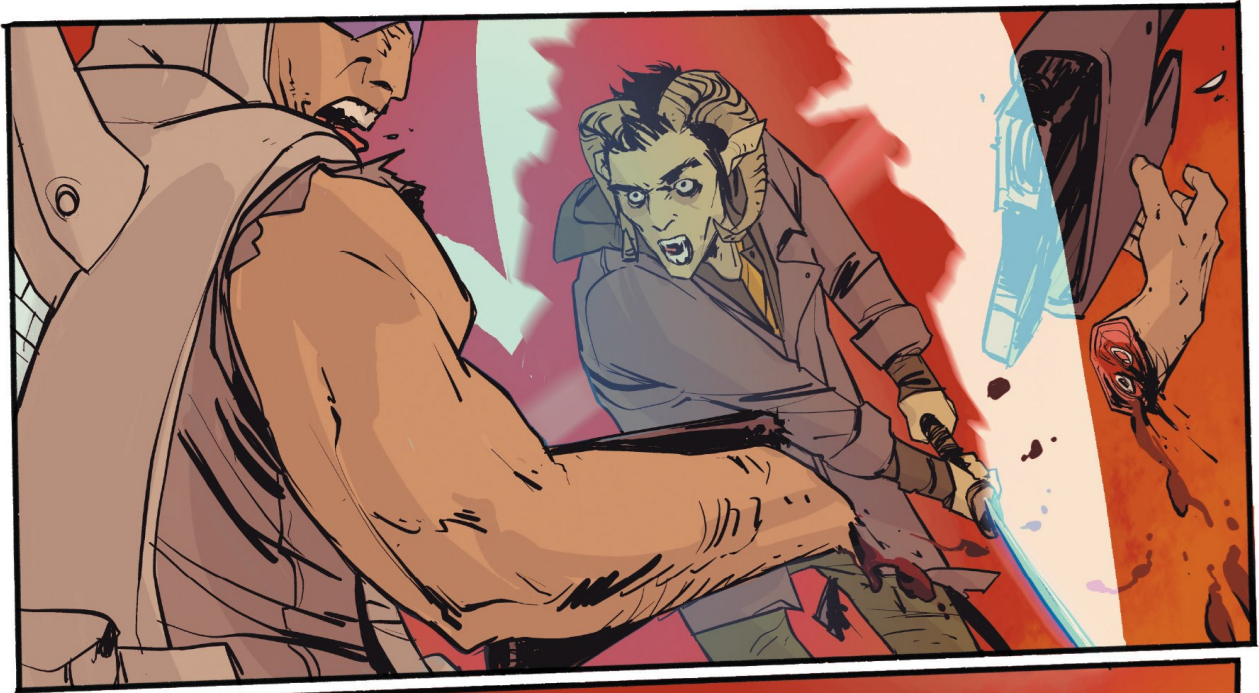


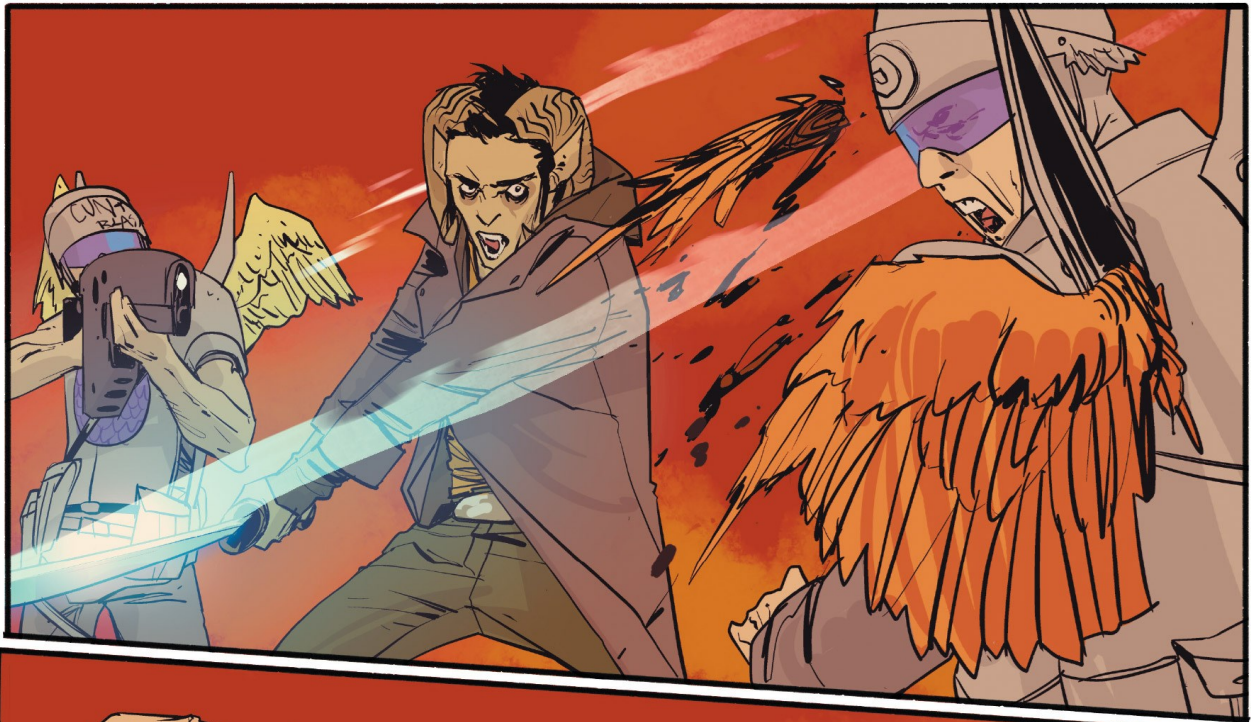






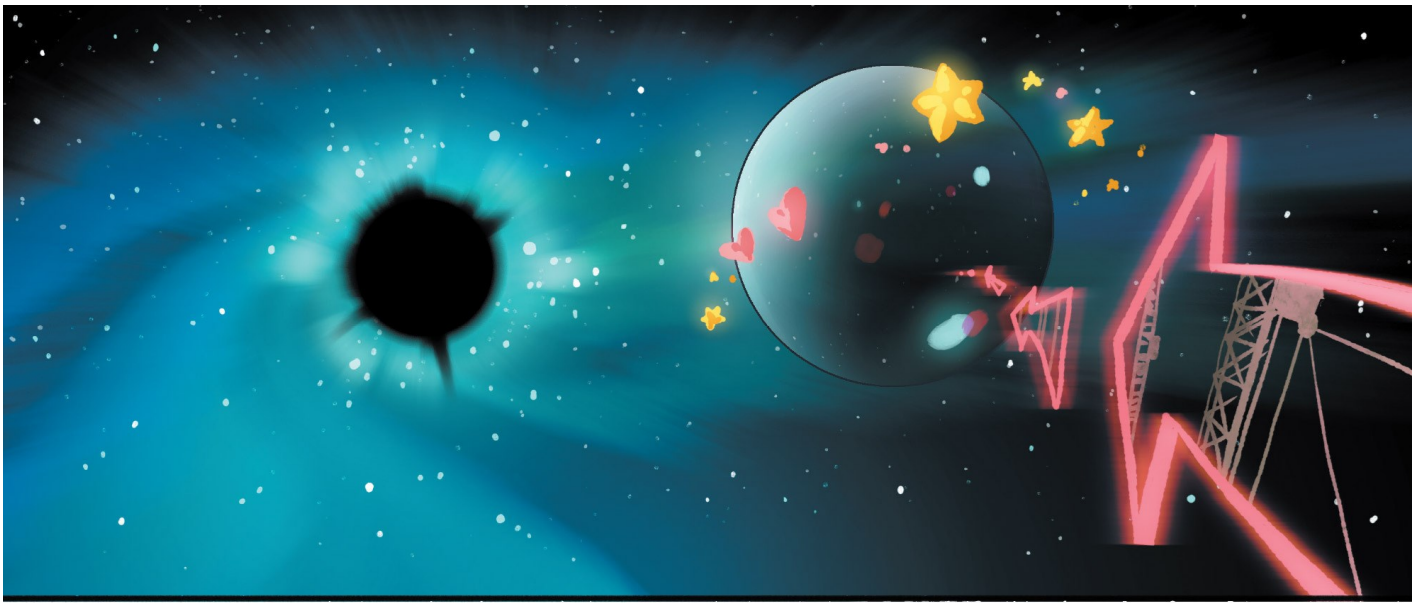


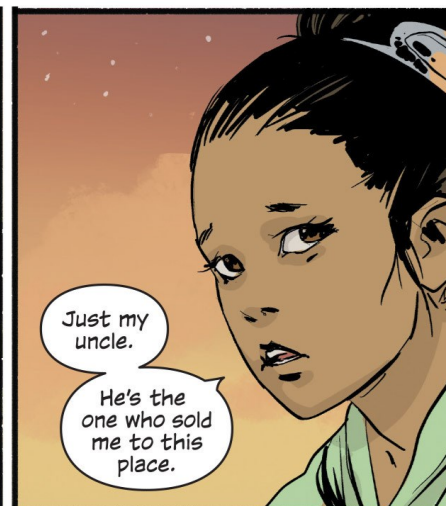


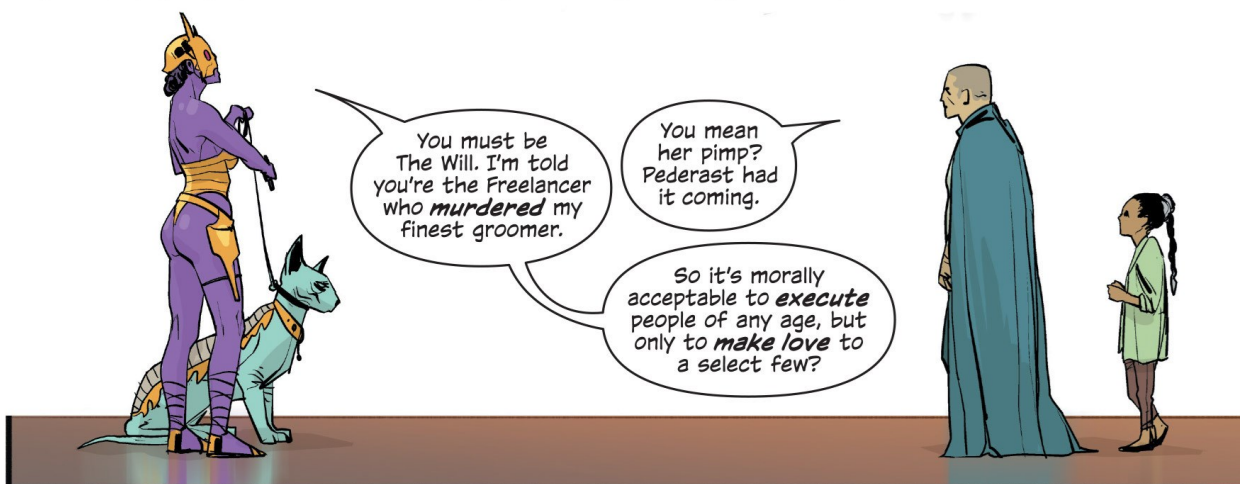
















It's all right, The Will.

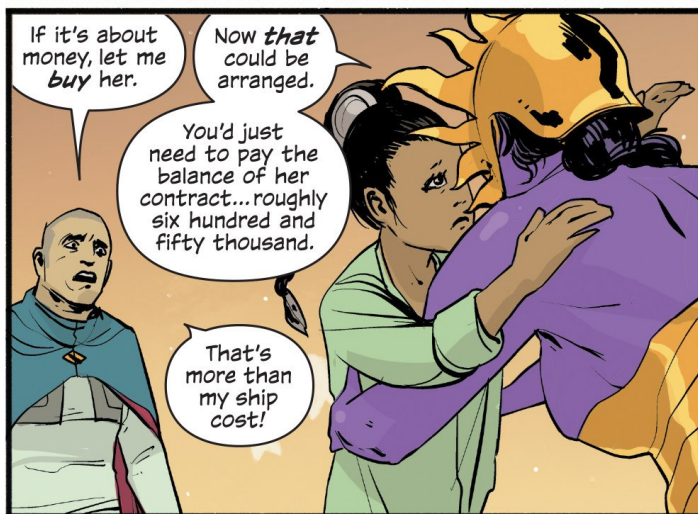
I'll be all right.



No. No, this is **bullshit**. I'll call the constables!

You mean my best customers?

The authorities know what you clearly don't, that Slave Girl would be **dead** if it weren't for us. Here she gets food, shelter, a steady income...



If it's about money, let me **buy** her.

Now **that** could be arranged.

You'd just need to pay the balance of her contract...roughly six hundred and fifty thousand.

That's more than my ship cost!



I've also confiscated the White Card you left with us for incidentals.

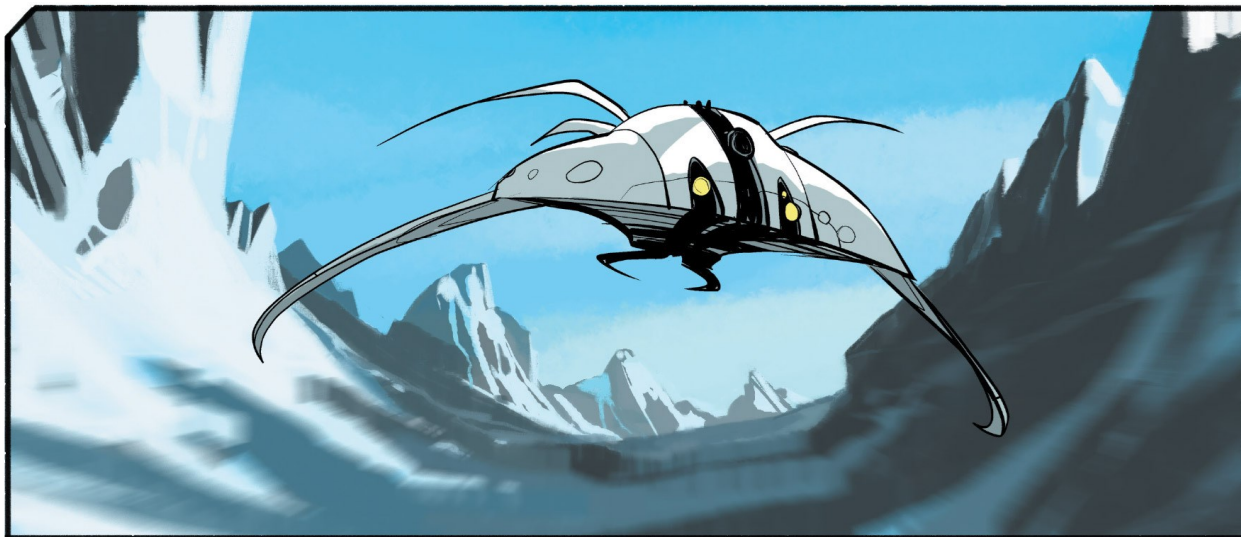
We'll call it even for the damages.



Think.



Think think think.



You're sure we can't be tracked?

Well, I ripped out this thing's Blue Box, so... pretty sure?

But the last time I drove one of these, it was a *simulator*, so my more pressing concern is not steering us into a mountain.

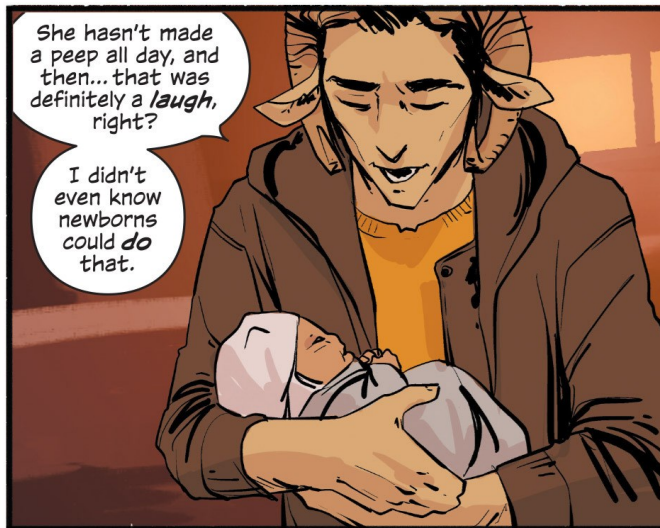
Do you think that binding spell I left on your men will keep them stable until the medics arrive?

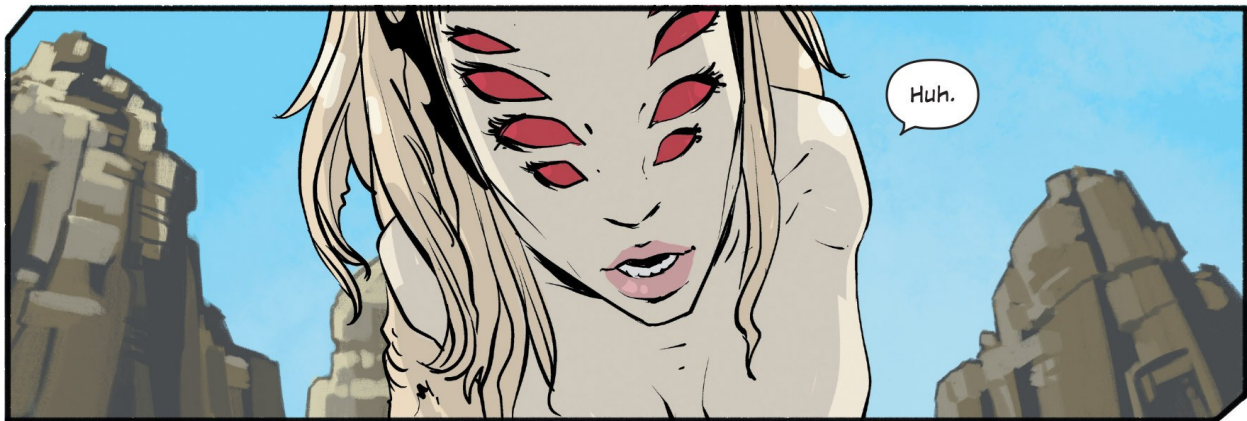
They weren't "my" men, Marko, they were trigger-happy assholes who got what was coming to them.

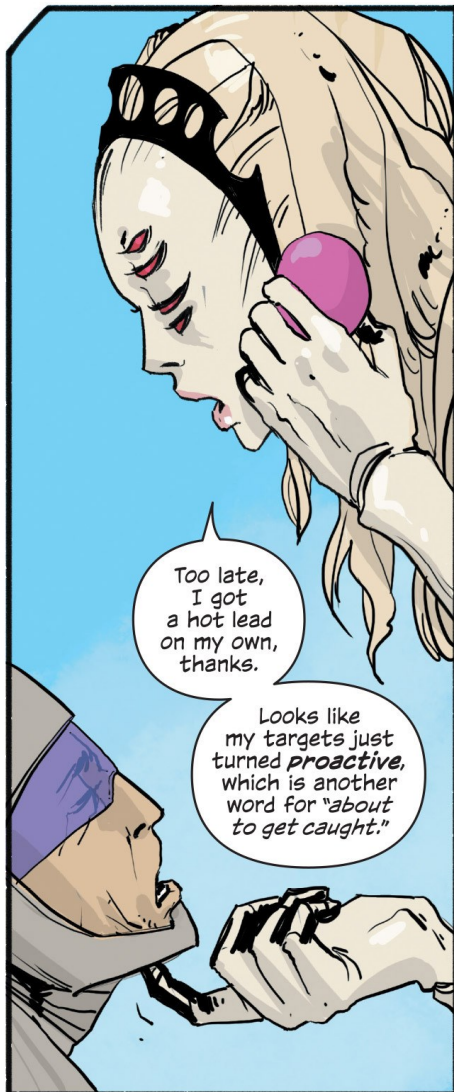
Besides, I stepped in before you could do anything you'd regret.

Then how come it feels like I've just gotten us *cursed*?









Too late, I got a hot lead on my own, thanks.

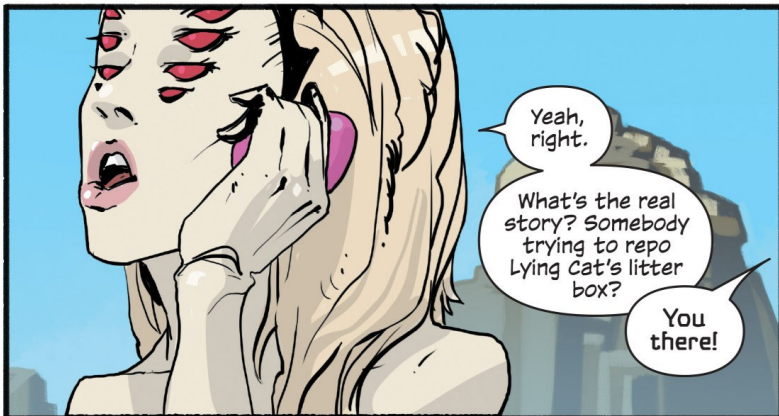
Looks like my targets just turned *proactive*, which is another word for "about to get caught."



Stalk, please. Something came up, and I need cash fast.

So? Last time I reached out to you, all you did was talk shit.

Idiot, I only said those things because I'm still in *love* with you!



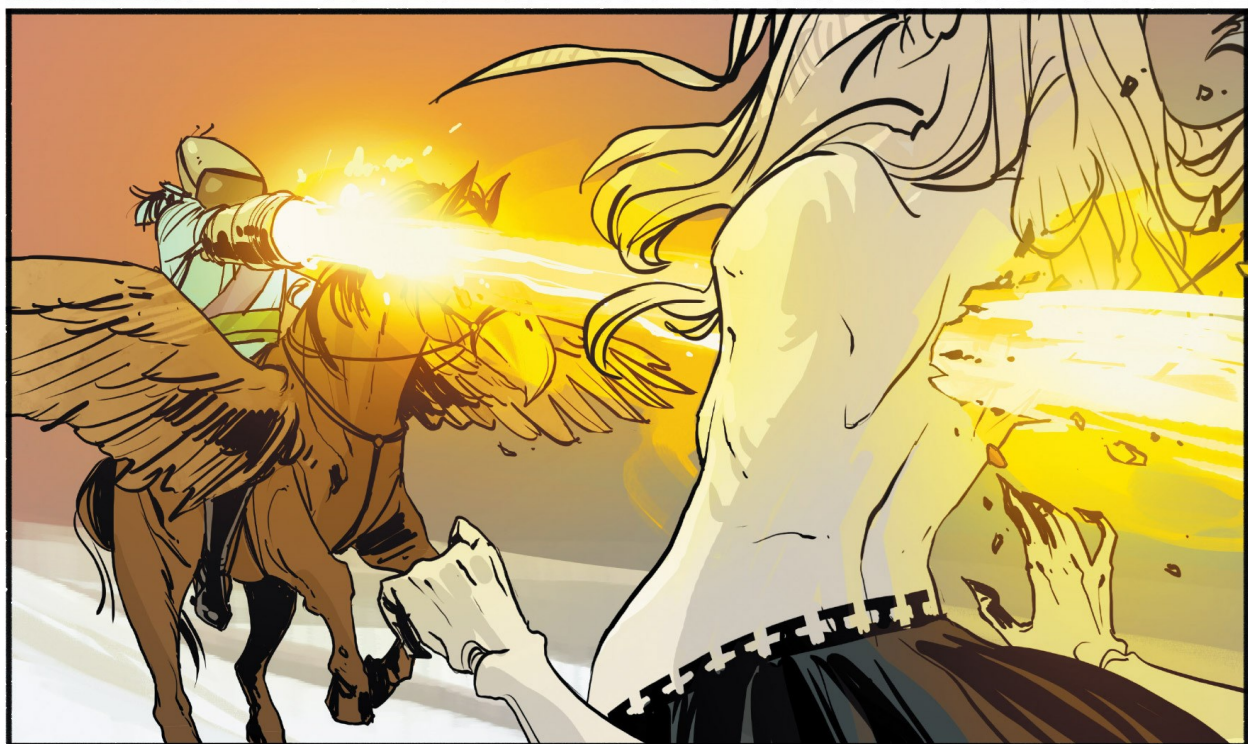
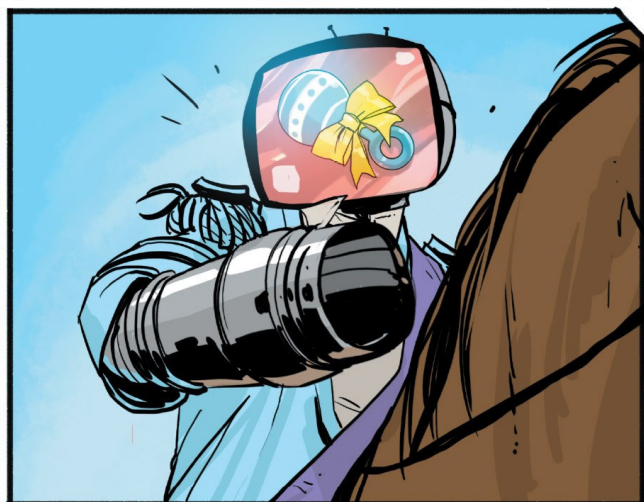
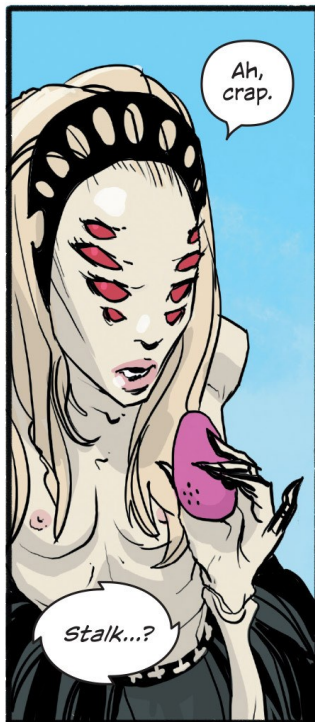
Yeah, right.

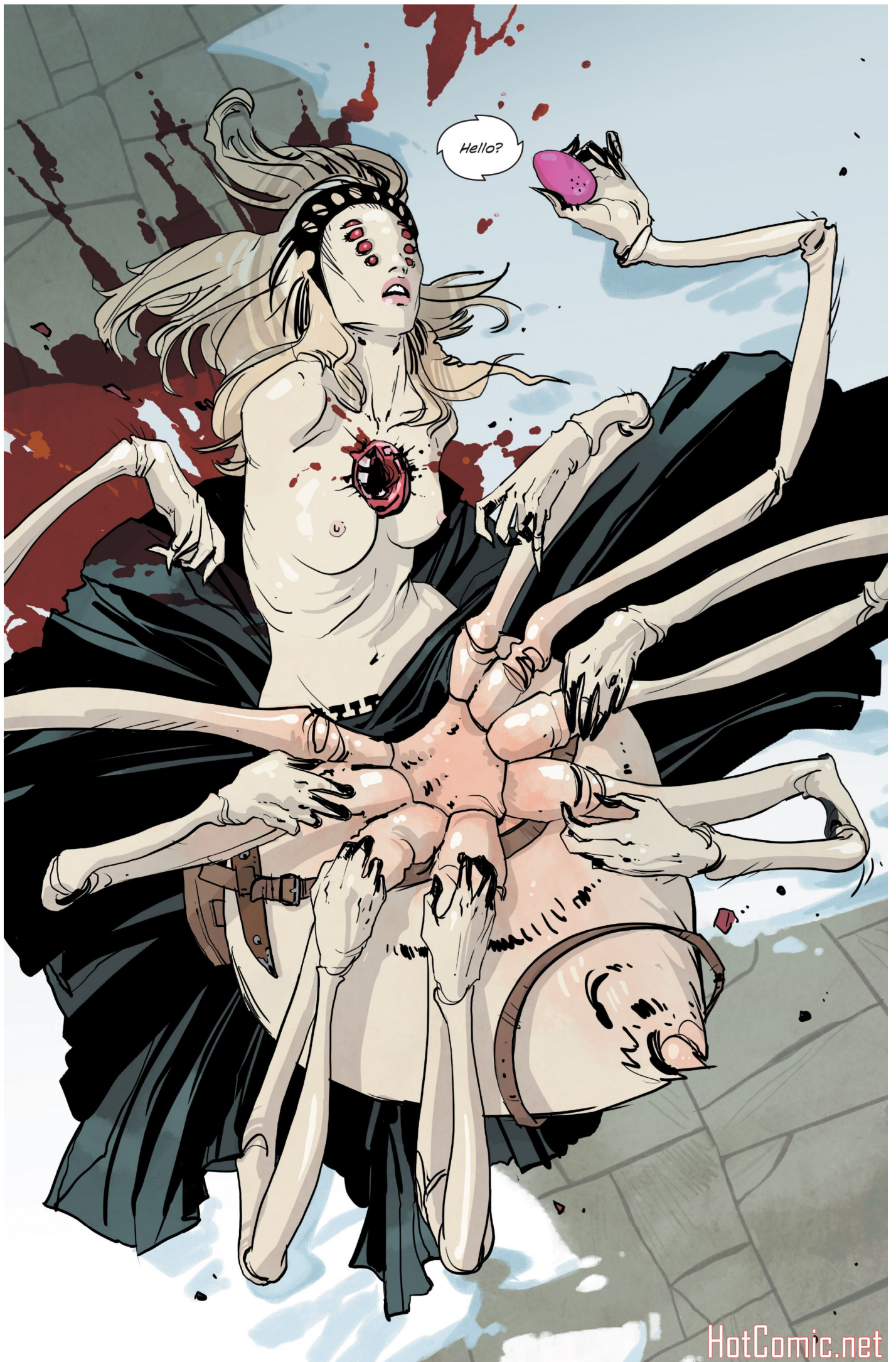
What's the real story? Somebody trying to repo Lying Cat's litter box?

You there!



Don't move a muscle.





TO BE CONTINUED

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Fiona's response after reading this issue's script was simply:

:{

Still, she drew the living hell out of this one, huh? Maybe I should try to make her depressed every month...

For now, let's get to a few of your letters, followed by my promised terrible photos of some of the amazing things you guys have sent our way.

Hiya,

It was the bourbon that ultimately did it. I mean, the snarky dialogue, engaging characters, and original worlds (and kick-ass art) all help—but your constant bourbon references meant I was struck by a moral imperative to share: I sit here catching up on a few months of comic to-dos and read Saga #1-3 (next up, Fatale #1-5) whilst enjoying Belle Meade Bourbon... highly recommended (and I say that not just as I live just minutes from that part of Nashville, but as a dedicated whisky drinker—replete with whisky stones and mid-thirties acid reflux).

Damnit—did not even get to anything substantive, but my six-year-old wants to play Killer Bunnies (again).

Eager for more,
Brent
Nashville, TN

P.S. My cousin was the robot in Lost In Space. No People Power Revolutionary, but will it earn me an honorable mention for Reader with the Most Famous Relative?

Are you shitting me? Your cousin was THE Robot?

If you didn't think that would impress me way more than being the descendent of an influential world leader, we've clearly never met. Welcome to the prestigious Reader With the Most Famous Relative Club, sir.

Dear Mr. Vaughan and Ms. Staples,

Thank you. I will dispense with the clichés quickly—this is my first letter written in to a comic and your comic “moved” me. The ways in which your work moved me are countless and diverse, so forgive me if I do not remark on each separately.

Today in Seoul, the South Korean military revealed cruise missiles which are capable of “reaching any installation within North Korea.” A strong move in an already tenuous ceasefire. Living in Seoul right now, this is a very real and strange thing to hear on the morning news, though living on this side of Korea it should be considered “good news,” I guess.

My wife and I have been married for almost three years. The talk of babies has begun. In your recent Reddit interview you mentioned your friends who, to completely butcher your succinct phrasing, “tried to talk you out of bringing a baby

into this (type) of world.” When hearing news about Syria, South and North Korea, US military personnel and their myriad “missteps” captured forever in horrific photographs, Iran and Israel saber-rattling, what type of world is this for a child?

Then I read Saga #1. Did it convince me that I should have a child? No. Did it convince my wife to have a child? No (she hasn't read it, unfortunately). But it did remind me of the power of capital-a Art. Is that pretentious? Can I say that in a comic book letters forum? I'm not sure, I'm new here. Besides, I think you can get away with printing this as long as you didn't say it yourself. Art that reminds us of humanity (even humanity masked in horned men and winged women) and something pure. Two people working on something so special, this brings me hope and, dare I say it, it provides me with inspiration. Because, as John Custer said, “You gotta be one of the good guys, son. ‘Cause there's way too many of the bad.” I think you're two of the good ones, Mr. Vaughan and Ms. Staples. And maybe I can be, too, or at least my future son/daughter, because someone's got to be in this world.

This letter is long(ish) and meandering, but I hope that you read it. Thank you again. Please feel free to print, edit, or throw out any and all parts of this letter.

Until Wreath and Landfall reconcile,
Dennis Burns
Seoul, South Korea

Dennis, that has to be one of the nicest letters anyone has ever sent to another human being. On behalf of the whole team, kam-sa-ham-ni-da.

Dear Mr. Vaughan,

Saga's a gas! And that's not just a cool palindrome, it's also the God's honest truth! Usually I only like Archie stories and funny comic books about crazy animals, but I was out of school all last month with a punctured eye so my dad bought me your comic because he said it was a good value. He always tells me not to expect too much but I hope all your future issues are good like this one is. I even gave it to my social studies teacher Mr. Gazorowski who hasn't given it back yet, but that's OK because he lives with my aunt. I promise to keep reading your comics.

Try to stay good,
Timmy McBroten
Pine Valley, NJ

Sorry about your punctured eye, Timmy, but if you're looking for a sweet patch, I might be able to hook you up. Either way, please keep us abreast of any/all developments between Mr. Gazorowski and your aunt.

To Be Cont'd—

Excuse or embrace the handwriting and construction paper—as we find ourselves without printer ink and paper in the harried days of new parenthood. My wife gave birth exactly 3 weeks ago to Hazel, and a friend suggested we check out Saga. Luckily our local Comic Shop had issues #1 & #2 on hand, and tomorrow I will return for #3. It's great so far—I love the art and characters equally. My wife and Hazel reserve their opinions, as one does not have the energy, and the other the ability, to read as of yet.

Keep them coming!

Erich, Holly and Hazel

P.S. Thanks for the Halloween costume idea.

P.P.S. Find attached Polaroid of our own Hazel, who is a complete angel, of course.

Congrats on your transcendently beautiful baby, Erich and Holly! Here's hoping that earthly Hazel likes her galactic counterpart if/when your daughter is ready to start enjoying our illustrated perversions.

Dear Brian,

Hello from New Zealand. I'm old enough to still be able to write letters—I would have used my fountain pen but it smudges on the card. I grew up reading comics and I've never really stopped. As I've gotten older I like more plot, more character, and a slower pace—I want to know characters well enough so that when they are in peril I worry about them—I'm surprised—not common in mainstream fast-paced superhero stuff.

So Saga—very interesting milieu, great art, design, and lettering—but what I enjoy most is a leisurely introduction (with lots of action) so I get to know the backstory before we move on—well done.

About me: I'm 44, an Anaesthetist (or Anesthesiologist in America) and I recently got married to a lovely lady called Penelope. Our 5 children (2 me, 3 her) were our attendants at the wedding so we felt very proud. I live in Dunedin a small (100k) city in the South Island of NZ.

The front of the card shows my house with the big cabbage tree in front. We'd like to cut it down but it's protected so we've made it a feature instead. If you're ever down this way we're 300 yards from a nice beach (good surfing) and 4 nice café/restaurants. Call in—we have spare beds as 2 of the children have moved out.

Good luck with Saga. My comic guy Warren (he orders comics for us from the US and hand delivers them—basically for zero profit) said I should try it as it looked like the sort of thing I'd like—he was right. So thanks to him and thanks to you.

Yours Sincerely,

Paul Temple

Dunedin, New Zealand

Much appreciated, Paul. But who is this mysterious "Warren," traveling from town to town hand-delivering American comics to international nerds in need? We should get him some kind of medal.

Fiona and Brian,

Wow—

Not just for the story and the artwork (those things were fantastic), but also for the address on the back page. I finished

the story and thought to myself amazing, fantastic, etc. My eyes skimmed over the address and a little blip went off and my brain "wow" (by the way not a word I normally use) "a physical address." And I read on and saw that the only way to correspond was through pen and paper and it made me smile and I thought I will write. Then I thought no as I have nothing clever or insightful to say, and then I remembered the last fan letter I sent I was 6 and it was to Lee Majors. I wanted to be a part of the Six Million Dollar Man Fan Club. Mostly I wanted to be the Six Million Dollar Man so I could marry the Bionic Woman. I guess I've dated myself a bit but oh well, I'm 43 and I'm still waiting for the right to get married—I found my Jamie Somers years ago, so I guess I'll end with a thanks for a great story. A nice memory and the impetus to put pen to page and stamp on envelope and a second fan letter.

Dawn

Thanks for the beautiful note, Dawn, and here's hoping you and your Jamie Somers will be allowed to tie the bionic knot soon.

Dear Mr. Vaughan,

I was intrigued by your appeal (at the back of Saga #1) for paper letters, and thought you might appreciate not just a letter from the UK, but an airletter. Airletters, also known as aerogrammes, or aerograms, or 'blueys,' are an endangered species, but while there exists people keen to write letters, and people keen to receive them, and both parties are separated by divisions of water and borders, they still have their place. Just. The US has stopped issuing them, but the UK still keeps them alive. The only thing is, you get strange looks when you ask for a pack of airletters at a London post office, as if you were in a pharmacy asking for a jar of leeches.

I could talk about how much I enjoyed Saga #1, how I was a big fan of Y: The Last Man and Ex Machina, but that does rather go without saying. What most intrigues me is that your noted love of 'factoids' can only be put to a very limited use in a completely imagined sci-fi universe. You can't even have talking lions saying how they're actually good at climbing trees, you know (how outrageous was that!) There's a TV quiz in the UK called 'Q.I.' that's pretty much based on BKV style factoids. Do you know it? If not, you'll be in factoid heaven...

So here's a factoid or two about airletters. Airletters are a British invention, though the man who invented them was a British postmaster stationed in Iraq in the 1930s—how easy it is to forget the UK had occupied Baghdad decades before the US... The idea was a simple solution for sending letters overseas: a single sheet of paper that was printed with prepaid postage on the outside, so it folded up and became its own envelope, via gummed tabs. The deal with the postage was that there must be no enclosures, ie nothing inside the envelope, so it had a fixed weight. They were more private than postcards, and could contain more writing. Once the Second World War came along, aerogrammes proved particularly popular with families of the armed forces. Then they stuck about in peace time, as they were actually the cheapest way of getting a message of decent length to someone overseas: phone calls were too pricey, telegrams too brief.

The fax machine saw an end to business use of airletters, but personal communication took the airletter's lifespan into the 1990s, up to—obviously—the widespread adopting of email.

I'm curious to know if this is the only airletter you get in response to Saga #1. It's hard to tell what inventions last, and what inventions become quickly obsolete once a more convenient and cheaper way of doing the same thing comes along. Will digital comics replace the paper kind too? And if not, why not? I'm writing this in the British Library, which has a permanent exhibition of literary 'treasures'—first folios of Shakespeare, handwritten lyrics by The Beatles scrawled on the backs of envelopes, and—yes—letters, from Dickens to his wife, for example, insisting that there was nothing going on with the woman he was practicing mesmerism on, honest... All in glass cases, of course. One wonders if one side of history in coming to an end, now that there are fewer original manuscripts to display—how can you display a word processing file in a glass case? Perhaps it doesn't matter anymore, that glass case museums will be like zoos—anachronistic and unnecessary for the edification and enlightenment and entertainment of future generations.

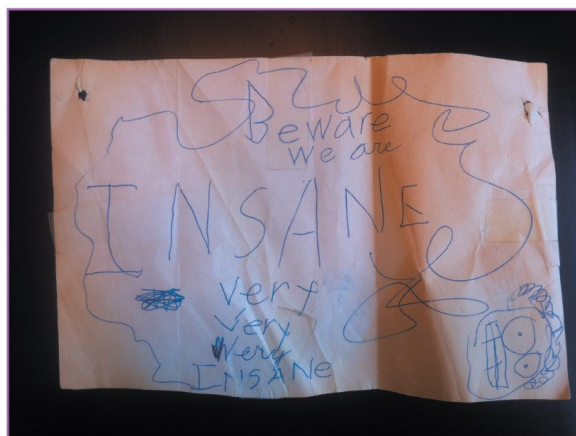
But the one factor that still eludes the digital era and has yet to be solved is POWER. Until there's a device to read e-books and e-comics that doesn't need plugging clumsily into a power socket every day or two, paper will stick around a little longer, it seems. Still more convenient in that respect, after all.

I'm also intrigued about your French-onion-soup-based router mishap! Deliberate? Fictional? I'm guessing you must have an interest in paper letters aesthetically rather than practically, and hope you'll elaborate... Finally, one aspect of letters to think about: they can't be HACKED INTO by the authorities once they've arrived.

Best wishes,
Dickon Edwards
London, UK

Fantastic airletter, Dickon, and cheers for one of about a dozen we received. I'm not familiar with Q.I., but per Garth Ennis' recommendation, Peep Show is my current UK television obsession. Fellow Yanks should Hulu that up posthaste.

And yeah, email is to me what zombies must be to Rick Grimes, a kind of endless horror that can only be endured, never defeated. But I've been a junky for physical letters since I was a little kid, so it's a thrill to open up the *To Be Continued* mailbox and see so many lovely envelopes, postcards and other cool shit like this:



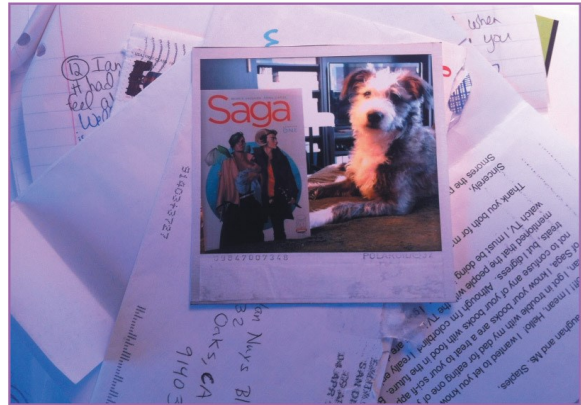
Dear *To Be Continued*,
We just recently moved into our new house and found this

(along with some socks) behind a drawer that wouldn't close. I hope it brings you no ill will (ha ha).

Garrett Ross,
Albuquerque, NM

If you can't read the note Garrett included, it's a child's drawing that warns "Beware we are INSANE very very very insane."

And now it's hanging on my wall.



Dear Mr. Vaughan and Ms. Staples,

Woof! I mean, Hello! I wanted to let you know how excited I am to read your new book, *Saga*. Brian, I got into trouble with my dad for eating one of your other books. After reading the first issue of *Saga*, I know your books are a treat to your sci-fi appetite, not your actual appetite. I promise not to confuse any of your books with food in the future. BTW, my parents need to get me more treats, but I digress. Although I'm colorblind, I really enjoy Fiona's artwork. My parents mentioned that the people with the TV heads are doing it doggy-style. But if that's the way they watch TV, I must be doing it wrong. I guess that's what you humans call "artistic license."

Thank you both for making art that is worth not eating.

Sincerely,
Smores the puppy
San Diego, CA

Smores, my sidekick Hamburger K. Vaughan is concerned about this new guardian-enforced lack of comics in your diet. For the record, Burger is a big fan of *Pride of Baghdad* (particularly the hardcover), which he says pairs nicely with a few back issues of *Optic Nerve*...



Oh, Hamburger.

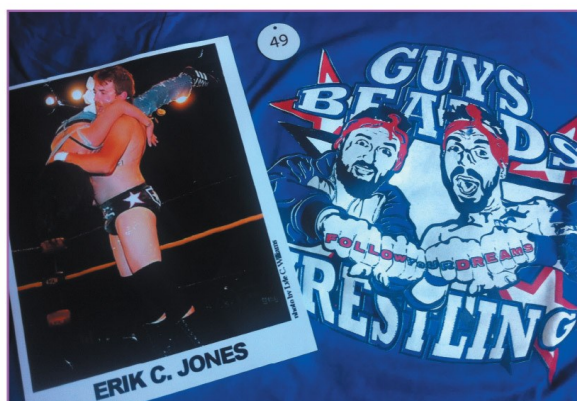
Anyway, here are a few more cool items/baubles/gewgaws we received, including this breathtaking portrait of a pregnant Alana by an artist named Ot (I think?) from Leeds College of Art, and this spectacular bit of imaginary anti-Wreath propaganda from Kansas City's own Reed Beebe, a board game for landfallian children called *MOONIES OUT*, complete with hilariously "racist" instructions on back:



Some more insanity, including a picture of Alex Sanchez's personal lying Cat Azula, a delicious cocktail recipe from Anthony Kirwalk written on an actual cocktail napkin, and an old Roy Rogers Viewmaster reel that fell out of an unidentified envelope:



And here's a photo of reader Erik C. Jones body-slammimg a woman, as well as a t-shirt from his old tag team Guys Beards Wrestling. That little "49" circle in the shot, sent in by Paul from Baytown, is a number used to keep your place in line at a local barbershop. Why is that the only thing in this picture that fills me with existential dread?



One last object, this from North Carolina sculptor Dan Willner, who writes:

Brian,

As a 40-year-old father of 3, I find it hard to bring myself to write a letter to someone who I admire. This is the first letter I have written to someone that I do not personally know since I was eight. That was to Harrison Ford after seeing Raiders of the Lost Ark.

So this is a fairly unique situation for me. I have enclosed a gift for you as a thank-you for all you have done for us fans. I hand carved Marko out of basswood and painted with acrylic paints. I have a tiki-ish style mixed with being a fan of Don Martin's artwork from the old MAD Magazine.

Great job with Saga and I am excited to pick up this book month after month.

I have so much to say, but don't want to take up your time. Thanks again!

Dan

SpandexSplinters.com



My terrible photography can't do justice to Dan's impossibly cool tiki-style Marko totem. Everyone should check out his site for more hand-painted goodness.

Dan, for your hard work and unique vision, Hamburger has selected YOU as this month's winner of some frippery from the Almighty Prize Drawer: a signed, super-rare *Saga* teaser poster, one extra shoelace (white), my personal front of the line pass to Universal Studio's Halloween Horror Nights (expired; sorry), and a hardcover copy of *Dr. Extraño: El Juramento*, Panini's excellent hardcover version of the Doc Strange miniseries I did with my old pal Marcos Martin for Marvel a while back.

It ain't much, but really, what did Harrison Ford send you after you wrote him?

Thought so.

Well, I think that's about as long as I can stay awake for this installment of *To Be Continued*. Special thanks to our own Fonografiks for always turning my wretchedly formatted documents into such elegant (looking, at least) letter columns.

Next month, it's the epic conclusion to our first storyline. Who knows which of Fiona's painstakingly designed characters I'll cavalierly snuff out next? Stay tuned, my robot cousins.

Hoarding your tchotchkes,

Brian

Question of the Month

"That IMAGE UNITED will be finished, followed by a sequel featuring a team up of the latest generation of Image characters including Firebreather, Invincible, Cassie Hack, Dr. Marrow, Tony Chu, Shinku and Bomb Queen, Mud Man, and the Mice Templar! We'll call it IMAGE NU-NITED."

Tim Seeley
HACK/SLASH, BLOODSTRIKE

"WHAT DO YOU HOPE WILL BE THE BIGGEST STORY TO COME OUT OF COMIC-CON THIS YEAR?"

"The biggest news should be that COMICS have made a comeback in the mostly film driven multi media convention and Image comics is leading the way for a future where creators run the show and not big business."

Jimmy Palmiotti
QUEEN CRAB

"Big isn't quite Enormous, but one can always hope that the world discovers just how many incredibly cool books Image has to offer in the later part of 2012. That, and Game of Thrones."

Tim Daniel
MORNING GLORIES, ENORMOUS

"Michael Bay to direct Twilight reboot." Followed by "Local officials still calculating death toll after Michael Bay announced to direct Twilight reboot."

Bob Guillory
CHEW

"Wild Children."

Alex Kot
WILD CHILDREN

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the **i** word
EXPERIENCE CREATIVITY

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THE THIRD DEGREE MIKE NORTON

Mike Norton has been working in comics for more than a decade, gaining recognition for projects such as *The Waiting Place* and *Jason and the Argobots*. In 2001, he became Art Director for Devil's Due Publishing, where he drew the first *Voltron* mini-series. In 2005, he went freelance and has since made a name for himself working on books like *Queen and Country*, *Gravity*, *Runaways*, *All-New Atom* and *Green Arrow/Black Canary*. His creator-owned web comic *Battlepug* is a cult hit and his new Image series with Tim Seeley, *Revival*, launches in July.

What are you working on right now?

Right now I'm drawing *Revival* and *It Girl* for Image. I also draw a weekly webcomic called *Battlepug*. And a bunch of other odds and ends.

What's the best part of your job?

Being able to make stuff for a living. Getting up every day and hanging out with a bunch of creative people drawing stuff never gets old.

What's the worst part of your job?

The stress of many many deadlines.

How did you first discover comics?

My dad gave me *Amazing Spider-Man* 163 when I was a kid. I wasn't even old enough to read. It and *Star Wars* were probably the greatest influences on me as a child.

If you weren't working in comics, what would you be doing?

A veterinarian or in a band. I played in bands in high school and the only occupation other than the arts that I even considered when I was a kid was veterinary medicine. That was until I realized it was mostly math and science and not sitting around petting puppies.

What's the best thing a fan has ever said to you?

I had someone tell me they were influenced by my art in their own work. That really got to me. I thought about how so many artists changed my life as a kid. Definitely boosted the ego.

Who is the biggest influence on your work?

All those childhood heroes- John Romita, John Byrne, John Buscema. Also a lot of the indy creators that I really got into in the late '80s and '90s like Bill Reinhold, Matt Wagner, Howard Chaykin, and Mike Allred.

Own up to one of your guilty pleasures.

Circus Peanut candies, pizza, Rudy Ray Moore movies, pugs

What is the single work of which you're most proud?

Right now it's *Battlepug*. It's the first work I've done that's completely me. I'm really proud of *Revival* also.

What was the last comic book you bought? Glory #24!

If you could be someone else for a day, who would it be?

Somebody thinner. I like being myself otherwise.

Pick three things you couldn't live without.

Friends (that includes dogs). TV. Pizza. I'm a simple man.

What makes you laugh?

Dogs. Happy dogs are the best.

What's the strangest thing you have in your house?

Uh... I guess the ceramic garden statues of Laurel and Hardy I've had since I was born.

What is one of your favorite places?

Ireland. Loved every second of being there. Also- being in front of my drawing table.

What music are you listening to these days?

My musical tastes are kind of stuck in the '80s. The last new music I bought was *Doomtree* and *Adam Warlock*.

What is your favorite film of all time?

I hate answering this question. I usually say *Star Wars* because it was the most influential.

Who is your best friend?

I have a couple of close friends. My buddy Ron from high school and Tim Seeley who I share a studio with.

What is the best advice you've ever received?

I believe it was Barry Bostwick as Capt. Ace Hunter in the motion picture *Megaforce* that said, "Deeds. Not Words." I have honestly based my career on this.

When was the last time you were truly frightened?

I had a skiing accident several years ago and messed up my knee pretty badly. Not being in control of something that could possibly end your life is really scary. I still can't go to the top of a ski hill now.

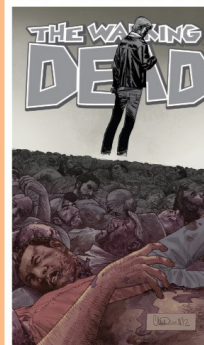
Name someone you really admire and explain why.

I admire all of the people working here at 4Star Studios. Tim Seeley & Steve Seeley, Josh Emmons, Sean Dove, Jenny Frison, and Mike Moreci.

What would you like to see happen in comics in the next 12 months?

I would like to see all of my comics become crazy popular so I can buy a big-ass boat. Also, if all comics could become crazy popular, I wouldn't be sad.

THE WALKING DEAD #100



"SOMETHING TO FEAR" CONTINUES!

This extra-sized chapter contains one of the darkest moments in Rick Grimes' life, and one of the most violent and brutal things to happen within the pages of this series. 100 issues later, this series remains just as relentless as the debut issue. Do not miss the monumental 100th issue of *THE WALKING DEAD*!

REVIVAL #1



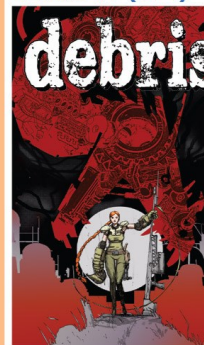
For one day in rural central Wisconsin, the dead came back to life. Now it's up to Officer Dana Cypress to deal with the media scrutiny, religious zealots, and government quarantine that has come with them. In a town where the living have to learn to deal with those who are supposed to be dead, Officer Cypress must solve a brutal murder, and everyone, alive or undead, is a suspect.

CHEW: SECRET AGENT POYO #1



An all-new *CHEW* No.1, a one-shot spinning off *CHEW*'s most popular supporting character, and comics' most beloved homicidal cybernetic kung-fu rooster. Concentrated mayhem. Feathers, rage and hate! Plus: an all-star pin-up gallery from some of the most staggeringly talented artists in the industry!

DEBRIS #1 (of 4)



In the far future, humanity has doomed planet earth to rot and decay, covering her surface with garbage. Now, ancient spirits called the Colossals rise from the debris and attack the remaining survivors, forcing the human race to the brink of extinction. One warrior woman, Maya, sets out to find the last source of pure water to save the world before the monsters bring it all to an end.

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**"5 YEARS.
60 ISSUES.
7920 PIECES OF LEAD.
300 PENS.
26 SKETCHBOOKS.
46 BRUSHES.
31 OUNCES OF INK.
4OZ OF WHITE OUT.
1320 PAGES.**

I LOVE MAKING COMICS."

RILEY ROSSMO



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